

# MEETING TIPS



Effective meetings require preparation, facilitation, inspiration and results.

- Be Prepared: Come to the meeting ready to state the purpose and agenda.
- Facilitate by keeping the meeting on time and on track, allowing input from the group appropriately.
- Inspire by incorporating activities that engage participants and generate discussion, and use visual aids to grab attention.
- Results means that the meeting achieves one or more outcomes. Share the results to keep participants connected to the work of your PTA.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Meetings

### **Do we have to meet? How often?**

Check your bylaws for a minimum number of meetings that must be held each year. If you have no reason to meet and bylaws allow you to skip the meeting, do not set up the meeting.

### **What do I do if there is a heated debate? What does the chair do?**

Maintain your impartiality; a chair is like a judge in a court. Ensure that all participants have a fair opportunity to express their points of view. Robert's Rules are designed to assist you—the rules allow all sides to be heard and the majority to rule. Take control so that the meeting can continue to be productive. Board members should remember that they also play a role in holding an effective meeting, and they should act professionally and ethically as they discuss even the most controversial of issues.

### **What if someone is dominating the meeting? What does the chair do?**

Be assertive and use phrases such as, "I think we should hear from some other attendees," or, "Can we have some comments from the rest of the group on this?" You may want to ask your secretary or vice president to list names of individuals as they raise their hands to speak so that you can call on them in order. A good ground rule is that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to speak once before someone gets a second turn.

### **What if the meeting starts off well but gets stuck on a particular topic?**

The chair facilitates the meeting and should take control and suggest another meeting to discuss the issue at a later date, or suggest that the concerned parties continue the discussion at the end of the meeting. If the topic is one that requires more time and thought, perhaps appoint a special committee or task force to research the topic and recommend a course of action for the next meeting. Sometimes it will be necessary to call for a decision and then move on to the next topic.